

Letter from Alexander Graham Bell to Alexander Melville Bell, August 18, 1899

August 18, 1899. Prof. A. Melville Bell, 1525 — 35th Street, W. Washington, D. C. Dear Pater Mous:—

I miss you very much, more especially as I am engaged just now in a good deal of literary work, where your advise and criticism would be especially valuable. I know you like to know what I am about, and as I now have the assistance of a young lady who can take down what I say while I comfortably smoke my cigar on the sofa, I think I can dictate a few words to you.

The new Magazine, the “Association Review”, the organ of the A. A. P. T. S. D., will soon come out, and I have been so busy with the preparation of statistical tables etc., the revision of stenographer's notes of my addresses at Northampton — together with laboratory work, that I hardly know whether I am standing on my head or my heels.

I send you the rough copy of the first part of my paper entitled “Historical Notes Concerning Speech Teaching in America”, which will appear in the Review. You need not return it, as I have sent a clean type-written copy to the Review, and will have that when it comes back from the printer for myself. After you have read this copy please give it to Mr. Hitz.

Please give my love to my dear little Mother, who looks after you so well, and say that I can't bear the thought of our both roasting down at Virginia Beach, when there are cool breazes and a VERANDA here — and two kittens waiting for you too.

To my great surprise Mabel has taken to the kittens and allowed them to remain here, they tear down her Japanese rice-bead, string curtains, scratch the colors of the sofas and

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chairs and even, I am afraid, surreptitiously examine the contents of any dishes that may be left on the dining room table — AND SHE SAYS NEVER A WORD. How long this will continue, I don't know, but in the meantime they are great favorites with everybody, Mabel included.

Mr. and Mrs. Lyon, from Rochester are here just now. I have been too busy to pay them very much attention, but they know how to look after themselves and are both interested 3 in my work.

I am told by the boss that we are to have a dinner party here tonight, and that, having finished up Francis Green I must take a day or two off — take a rest — and show something of the country to Mr. and Mrs. Lyon, so tomorrow Mr. and Mrs. Lyon, Mabel and I will go camping out in the old gypsy wagon, near the Little Narrows. As we can't all very well sleep in the gypsy wagon, we shall take a tent along with us. A couple of days of this will do us all a great deal of good.

I have been very much surprised to hear of Balf's marriage to Miss Sigsbee. Of course the thing is done now and cannot be helped, and it seems to me that under the circumstances — and as everyone will be down on Balf — a kind word on his behalf would be much appreciated by him. I have no doubt, also that Capt. Sigsbee would be relieved to know that Balf was not a swindler, gambler or something of that kind, so I wrote a note to Capt. Sigsbee, a copy of which I send to you.

Run away marriages seem to be hereditary in his branch of the family: If the spirit should move you to writs to Capt. Sigsbee, a kind word on behalf of Balf, I am sure it 4 would be much appreciated. If, on the other hand, your feelings should be the reverse of kind — why — there will be no necessity to write at all.

What does Uncle David say to the matter, having run off with his own wife he can hardly consistently be very much down on his grand-son for doing the same, but I suppose that he was in a position to support a wife, whereas Balf — at least so far as I know — is not.

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If any one has a kind word to say on behalf of the young people they better say it now, for they doubtless need it:

I am very glad to see from Werner's Magazine that the National Association of Elocutionists appreciated your visit to Chautauqua. I hope you may be able to give many more 'last words' to the Association. It must be a comfort to you to find that there are people in America who appreciate you for your own labors, and not simply as the father of A. C. B. I am sorry that I have not got ten thousand dollars lying round loose to put into Werner's proposed company. My contributions to the V. B., the A .A.P.T.S.D. and the N. G. Society? are all I can stand and I shall have to decline Mr. Werner's proposition.. Love to all in Washington,

Your Loving Sons, Alexander Graham Bell.